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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Savior, help our lawmakers to see eternity beyond time, remaining loyal to You in all things. Awaken in them a desire to represent Your purposes in our Nation and world. Give them grace, O God, to love and to even pray for those who would strive to hurt them. May nothing blind them to Your truth, as You lead them through the night of mortality to the light that never fades. Lord, keep them calm in the quiet center of their lives, so that they may find serenity in life's swirling stresses. And Lord, fill us all with Your peace, as we strive to understand others as we would wish to be understood.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, January 10, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. PAUL thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

#### TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we have been talking all week about the ways our historic tax reform law is immediately helping middle-class families. It has been less than a month since Congress passed and the President signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, but already more than 1 million Americans are on track to receive special bonuses, permanent raises, and other benefits, and their employers are attrib-

uting these changes directly to tax reform.

In fact, 100,000 employees of American Airlines are each receiving a \$1,000 tax reform bonus; U.S. Bank is raising its minimum wage to \$15 and is also giving \$1,000 bonuses to 60,000 employees; 29,000 employees of Nationwide Insurance are also receiving bonuses, and 33,000 are getting an increase in their retirement match. These are just a few of the 100-plus companies that have already announced new benefits for American workers as a direct result of tax reform. These are only the immediate benefits.

Mainstream economists agree that in the months and years to come, the permanent changes we made in the way we tax businesses will make our economy more vibrant and more competitive. That means greater investment and higher wages for American workers. Of course, all this is in addition to the direct effects the tax cuts themselves will soon have on family budgets.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will reduce income tax rates and significantly expand key deductions. We took money out of Washington and put it right back in the pockets of middle-class Americans. Starting as early as February, the IRS will withhold less from paychecks, and workers will get to deposit more of their hard-earned money right into their own bank accounts. In 2018 alone, for a typical family of four earning just over 70,000, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act could mean a tax savings of more than \$2,000.

Nearly every day, reports come out about a new way this historic tax reform bill is helping Americans. Here is a subject that is particularly relevant around many kitchen tables this winter: utility bills. All around the country, utility companies that will benefit from our new tax cuts are already discussing plans to pass their savings on to customers.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Major power companies in Illinois, Maryland, and Massachusetts are already proposing plans to give their customers tens of millions of dollars in relief by lowering the rates they charge for energy. And get this: According to CNBC, a South Carolina electric and gas utility is planning to give a cash payment directly to its customers, averaging \$1,000 per household. More are following suit. In Montana, Louisiana, and Indiana, regulators are already working with utilities to determine how households will benefit from the tax savings. In my own State of Kentucky, the Public Service Commission directed a number of the electric, gas, and water companies to track their savings and make plans to cut rates for consumers.

As any mother or father who has to balance a checkbook and pay bills every month can attest, this is welcome news for middle-class families. These reductions will be especially helpful to the most vulnerable in our society.

According to data from the Department of Health and Human Services, energy costs eat up a significantly higher percentage of household income for poor families than for other families. In other words, for a software engineer in Silicon Valley, a lower heating or air conditioning bill may go unnoticed, but for workers who clean that office overnight, this relief will make a real difference.

A drop in utility bills effectively amounts to progressive tax relief. This is just another example of how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is rapidly proving to be a serious asset to poor and middle-class families—precisely the people whom my Democratic friends in the House and Senate loudly claimed would get nothing at all from this bill.

It has been 3 weeks—3 weeks—lower utility bills, 1 million special tax reform bonuses and pay raises, and this is only the beginning.

A Republican majority in the House and a Republican majority in the Senate and President Trump listened to the facts instead of the political spin. I am proud that we passed this historic bill and gave families across America the tax relief they have waited decades to receive.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we have barely over a week to negotiate a broad package of must-pass items, including an extension of government funding, a deal to lift the spending caps

for both defense and urgent domestic priorities, a healthcare package, disaster aid, an agreement to protect the Dreamers, and to provide additional border security.

The path forward on some of these issues is very clear. There are significant bipartisan majorities that would vote to extend CHIP, or the Children's Health Insurance Program, and community health centers. There seems to be a growing consensus on how we can pass the 702 FISA Court program.

I am also confident that we could assemble a disaster aid package that addresses the needs of all of the States and Territories—Texas, Florida, Louisiana, California, the Western States that have been plagued by fires, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—as well as modifying what the Forest Service does so they don't spend all of their money simply fighting forest fires and not do the job they are intended to do, which is to prevent future forest fires by careful forestry programs.

Even where the path is murkier, the outlines of a deal exist. If we don't lift the spending caps in short order, the sharp ax of sequestration will fall on the military side of the budget and on the domestic side of the budget. That is a scenario everyone wants to avoid.

The majority leader continues to insist that we should raise the budget caps unequally, sparing our military but not critical domestic programs that create jobs, grow our economy, and help the middle class. We Democrats believe we absolutely must provide the resources our men and women overseas need to protect our country. We believe that strongly, but we also know that there are many important issues here at home—combating the opioid crisis, improving veterans' healthcare, shoring up pensions for millions of hard-working Americans who are approaching retirement, and dealing with rural development and rural broadband. These items are all crucial to the middle class.

The deadly scourge of opioid addiction has contributed to the first consecutive-year decline in life expectancy in the great United States of America since the early 1960s. That is an astounding and alarming fact that should rouse everyone in this Chamber to action. It is not occurring in most of our Western country allies.

Some of our veterans have been waiting in line for healthcare at veterans hospitals for over a year. These men and women served our country bravely. We have a solemn responsibility to serve them when they come home, and we are not living up to that responsibility right now.

Over a million Americans paid into pension plans with the expectation that they could retire with basic dignity. For so many of them—teamsters, miners, food workers—pensions have fallen short, and a lifetime of careful savings may be ripped away from pensioners at the last moment. We could

make progress on each of these issues through a budget that lifts the spending caps equally for defense and non-defense.

The Republican majority, which conveniently forgot its long history of opposing deficits when passing a \$1.5 trillion tax bill, cannot, in good conscience, turn around and complain about deficits here. So let's make the investments we all know are essential in both our military and in our middle class.

Even on the most challenging issue we face, the fate of the Dreamers, there appears to be a path forward. Yesterday's immigration meeting at the White House was encouraging for two reasons. First, practically everyone at the table—including some of the most conservative voices on immigration, like the Senator from Iowa—agreed that we must resolve the future of Dreamers by passing DACA protections into law. That is a very positive development.

Second, President Trump appeared to endorse a narrow deal to protect the Dreamers, leaving the thornier issues for a later debate on comprehensive immigration reform—a debate that, personally, I would welcome, the sooner the better.

But first, we have to do this narrow deal. President Trump also backed off his demand that a DACA deal include an expensive and ineffective border wall across the entire length of the southern border. Of course, the devil is in the details. We Democrats have repeated time and again that we are ready, willing, and eager to support an effective, practical border security measure in a deal that enshrines DACA into law. The President yesterday seemed to agree with that. We agree with that. For these reasons, the meeting was encouraging.

Last night, a Federal judge ruled against the Trump administration's handling of the termination of the DACA Program. Let me be very clear. The ruling last night in no way diminishes the urgency of resolving the DACA issue. On this we agree with the White House, which says the ruling doesn't do anything to reduce Congress's obligation to address this problem now. A court case, of course, is no guarantee of lasting security. A higher court can quickly overturn it. Unsurprisingly, the Department of Justice responded to the ruling last night by saying that it "will continue to vigorously defend [this] position, and looks forward to vindicating its position in further legislation." So the fact remains that the only way to guarantee the legal status for Dreamers is to pass DACA protections into law and to do it now. For that reason, a resolution to the DACA issue must be part of a global deal on the budget.

We cannot tolerate delay. Delay is a tactic employed by those who do not wish to see a deal. Let me just say, promises that maybe in the future we will do it—particularly on immigration—have vanished by the wayside.

Unless DACA is on a must-pass deal—a must-pass bill—in terms of a global agreement, people are rightfully skeptical that it will ever happen. Somehow, somewhere, someone will say: I can't do it.

Let's not forget that the House has been a graveyard even for immigration proposals that have had bipartisan consensus here in the Senate. So it must be on a must-pass bill. Otherwise, we are not going to get it.

Congressional negotiators and the valiant group here in the Senate led by Senators DURBIN and GRAHAM are focused on this issue right now. The meeting they had yesterday—I talked to both Senators DURBIN and GRAHAM last night and this morning—provides a clearer picture of the parameters of the deal. The iron is hot. We should strike now. Delay will snuff out the hope of getting an agreement that both sides can live with. Let us press forward. Each side is going to have to give.

I am confident, though, that both sides can come to an agreement on border security. I am convinced now both sides want to find a consensus on DACA. Some will support a deal enthusiastically, others reluctantly, but, nonetheless, an agreement is within reach. We ought to get it done through the Senate, through the House, and onto the President's desk for signature now. So let's get the job done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

#### ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, here we are at the start of a new year. Last year, the Republican majority decided to dedicate the year to government by and for the powerful and the privileged, but how about this year, 2018? We pay attention to our Constitution, which starts with that vision of government, not for the powerful, not for the rich, not for the privileged, not for the well connected, not for the wealthy but for the people of the United States. It is a vision where power is distributed, and power comes up from each individual citizen to create policies for their general welfare.

Last year, we saw this complete dedication to trying to wipe out healthcare for 20 million to 30 million Americans in order to provide tax benefits for the richest. How big were those tax benefits? Well, if you add up the provisions that are dedicated to the powerful corporations and those benefits for the wealthiest 10 percent, and most of that goes to the wealthiest 1 percent, those provisions stack up to over \$2 trillion—\$2 trillion.

It is very hard to get your hands around \$2 trillion. Those are not numbers we use in ordinary conversation. Let's take that down to the amount of money per man, woman, and child—per citizen in America. Well, that is about \$6,000—\$6,000 taken from the community funds for every man, woman, and child in America to deliver to the wealthiest Americans. That was gov-

ernment by the Republican majority in 2017. It was not "We the People" but we the powerful and we the privileged.

How about we have a new year's resolution that pays attention to the vision of our Constitution, to that vision of government of, by, and for the people?

Ben Franklin once wrote in his "Poor Richard's Almanac":

Be at war with your vices,  
At peace with your neighbors,  
And let every New Year find you a better man.

Every new year is a chance to recreate and envision where we are headed. Certainly, it is a big vice to use this Chamber, in contravention of our Constitution, to pursue policies for the powerful and privileged rather than for the people. So let's set that vice aside and have a bipartisan year, dedicated to making a foundation for families to thrive and jobs and education and healthcare and a healthier planet.

Right now, we should have an immediate new year's checklist of things to get done, and that checklist starts with the budget. We have just 9 days until funding runs out for the Federal Government, and we all know from experience what that means—parks shut down, medical research stops, passports don't get processed, and businesses can't check in on their I-9 applications for employees. That is the type of conduct that happens in banana republics—basically, in countries that don't have a competent system of government. It should not happen in the United States of America.

We are deep into the financial year, which started on October 1. October passed. November passed. December passed. We are well into January and still the majority leadership of this body is unable to put together a process that addresses just key, fundamental issues. Why is that? Because they were so distracted by delivering trillions of dollars to the richest of Americans and trying to destroy healthcare for millions of Americans that they didn't tend to the fundamentals that need to be tended to. Let's take care of those things now.

The Children's Health Insurance Program. Here we are. It expired on September 30 of last year. Nine million children across America depend on this insurance. This insurance was crafted in a bipartisan manner. It was forged in an agreement between Senator HATCH, a Republican, and Senator KENNEDY, a Democrat, who had very different visions of America but who could agree that families who didn't qualify for Medicaid and weren't affluent enough to buy insurance for their children could still have insurance for their children. These are the working poor of America, the struggling workers of America.

It was forged in a bipartisan manner, but this year my Republican colleagues decided to make these children a bargaining chip for their effort to get more for the privileged and the powerful. That has to end.

When children do not have insurance, they don't get that dental benefit to take care of those cavities. They don't get that medical exam. They don't get those inoculations, those vaccinations. They don't get treatment when they are injured because their parents can't afford to take them to the doctor. They don't get treatment when they are sick for the same reason. Let's take care of children's healthcare.

This is not a partisan issue. It was forged in a bipartisan manner, and it should be so today.

What also expired on September 30 of last year was the legislation authorizing support for our community health clinics. Community health clinics are the front door to healthcare for millions of Americans. It is that friendly place in your rural community, in your urban neighborhood, where you can go through the front door and get assistance.

Talking about millions of Americans who go through those front doors, there are more than 1,400 clinics across the country. These are popular in rural areas. They are popular in urban areas. They are popular in red States. They are popular in blue States. There is nothing partisan about it, but the leadership of this body has no interest, has seen no urgency in reauthorizing the ability for those health centers to stay open.

In Oregon we saw, as a result of the Affordable Care Act, 30 more health clinics established. We saw a lot more resources go into both mental illness and into drug abuse during a period in which the opioid crisis joined the meth crisis and afflicted both rural and urban areas. Lots of folks come to this floor and say: We have to take on opioids. It is not just on the left-hand side of the aisle, but it is also on the right-hand side of the aisle. People base virtually their entire campaigns on taking on opioids. Yet the Republican leadership says this isn't important. Let me tell you, this is important, and we need to get it done.

Then let's turn to the Dream Act. Dreamers are those children raised in our communities, now 16 through their midtwenties. They are productive members of our communities. They have gone through our high schools or are in high school now. They are in college. They are working. They are contributing. They know no other country than ours.

Across both sides of the aisle we hear folks say: We want to take care of them and establish a structure for this, a legal structure for the Dreamers.

The President yesterday hosted a bipartisan conversation at the White House to say: Let's get this done. He expressed his support. In fact, everyone in the room expressed support for getting this done.

Each one of these—the budget, the children's healthcare, the health centers, the Dream Act—are bipartisan efforts. These are things that should have been addressed long ago if my Republican colleagues instead weren't so

obsessed with decimating healthcare for millions of Americans and ripping off the National Treasury to deliver benefits to the wealthiest Americans.

Let's get this done for our Dreamers. More than 100 a day are losing their status, which means they can no longer legally work in our country. It matters. It is urgent. It is productive for our communities. It is bipartisan. Let's get it done.

How about disaster relief? We certainly saw a powerful punch against our States from the raging forest fires in the West to the hurricanes in the South and Southeast. Hurricanes have hit Texas and Florida and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands—massive destruction. Fires have scourged States from Montana to Idaho, to Washington, to Oregon, to California. Those fires burned well into the winter months of November and December.

These afflictions hit Democrats and Republicans, red States and blue States. Why don't we get this done? These are basic, bipartisan, let's-get-it-done agendas. Let's get it done now.

Let's make sure, when we are addressing the impact of those storms in the South and those hurricanes—Harvey, Irma, and Maria—we simultaneously recognize the destructive impact forest fires have had that have been scourging the West. They have destroyed a lot of the infrastructure in the forest that needs to be replaced. They have affected a lot of communities that need economic help recovering.

Certainly, it made us recognize that we have millions of acres of forests that can become much more fire resilient if they are thinned, if we get rid of the fuel buildup on the floor of the forests. When they become more resilient, they stop the forest fires.

Thinning is a win-win. It produces a steady supply of sawlogs for the mill and stops forest fires when they are raging. There was a forest fire headed right for Sisters, OR, and it hit an area that had been thinned. Guess what. It stopped. The trees were farther apart. The fuels were removed from the floor of the forest.

Now we have created a real fire hazard with our clear-cut strategy of years past—the forestry grows very close together, often replanted. Trees are all the same height. It is very easy for the fire to get into the canopy, and once in the canopy, every tree is touching the next tree. It rages on, and there is no break.

But a natural forest is very different. We can more effectively replicate the fire-resistant nature of a natural forest by thinning these overgrown, second-growth forests. We can then create that supply of saw logs, keep our mills open, keep our people working, and strengthen our economies in rural America. We can do it by funding this reduction, these thinning programs in acreage that has already gone through the environmental process. In Oregon, we have 1.6 million acres already ap-

proved for thinning, if we can pass the funds to get it done.

So let's take this on in 2018. Let's dedicate 2018 to that vision in our Constitution of "we the people." Let's stop passing legislation targeted specifically to help out the richest at the expense of everyone else in America. Let's turn over a new leaf from campaigns and policies and legislation by and for the privileged and the powerful to honor the vision of our Constitution, the vision of our Nation, a Nation of laws which distributes power that produces policies by and for the people of the United States of America, for making families stronger, for building those foundations of jobs and healthcare and education and a healthy planet.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority win.

#### FUNDING OUR MILITARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I admit I wasn't here during the entirety of the comments from our friend, and I saw his to-do list. The only thing missing from that to-do list was to fund our military—or at least I didn't see it on there. In all fairness, maybe he mentioned that in his comments.

We now have 9 days to reach an agreement to keep the government funded, to keep the lights on, to keep paying the salaries of our government employees, and, of course, to fund our military, which ought to be our No. 1 priority. If we think about things that government must do, funding our national defense is the only thing that we can do and that government can do. There are a lot of other things that government does that are optional or maybe things we would like to do, but funding our military is the No. 1 priority—or should be.

As the Senate majority leader mentioned earlier this week, our Democratic colleagues persist in the notion that we should only increase defense spending if we increase nondefense spending by the same amount. The parity that the minority leader and the other Democrats call for doesn't make any sense, though. It is apples and oranges. They act as though all government spending is exactly alike and enjoys or should enjoy the same priority, and that is just not true. We know that from our own family budgets or from a small business. There are things we must do, things we want to do, and things we will do if there is money left over. But our friends across the aisle, who are obstructing our ability to get to negotiated budget caps and fund our military, act as though all of that is the same, that must do, want to do, and what you will do if you have money left over—that those are all exactly the same, and that is just not the case. It is not the case in our family budgets, in our small business budgets, nor is it the case for the Federal budget. Not everything is a priority. But we do know that the No. 1 priority must be the safety and security of the Amer-

ican people by making sure our military is adequately funded.

The Budget Control Act signed into law in 2011 was what I would call a necessary evil. The Budget Control Act provided that we would have a bipartisan, bicameral negotiation and try to come up with a grand bargain.

That was what President Obama liked to talk about a lot—the grand bargain. But some people suggested that was kind of like a unicorn, something that people describe but no one has ever seen—a grand bargain. I wish it weren't true.

The Budget Control Act said that in the absence of a grand bargain, we would have budget caps or sequestration imposed on discretionary spending above certain levels. It proposed separate budget caps for defense and non-defense, and if the budget caps are exceeded, there is an automatic enforcement mechanism called sequestration which imposes across-the-board cuts, which I mentioned a moment ago.

The purpose of this sequestration—or these across-the-board cuts—is to do something in the absence of us doing what we should do; in other words, we should take it upon ourselves to figure out what the appropriate spending levels should be for defense and non-defense, and then we should act to appropriate that money. But this is basically a fail-safe mechanism, which operates as a result of our failure to deal with this in a proactive way, and it has hit our defense spending much, much harder than domestic spending.

As we know, neither our defense spending nor tax cuts are the cause of our deficits and debt. It is the 70 percent of spending that happens in the Federal Government on autopilot. It is the entitlements that have been going up well in excess of 5 percent a year and are causing instability and unpredictability in those important programs, such as Medicare and Social Security, but at the same time racking up huge deficits and debt that future generations are going to have to pay back. Somebody is going to have to pay it back, and it won't be the present generation because we won't be around then. It is simply immoral to continue to see this happen without trying to deal with it.

But back on the matter of the Pentagon, as one op-ed writer put it in the Washington Post last month—he said:

The Pentagon and the welfare state have been locked in brutal combat for decades, and the Pentagon has gotten clobbered. . . . Welfare programs—Social Security, Medicare, food stamps and other benefits—dwarf defense spending.

In the 1950s and 1960s, defense spending was roughly 8 to 10 percent of our economy. In 2016, it was just 3 percent. That is a huge change.

James Clapper, the former Director of National Intelligence, said that in his 50 years in the intelligence community, he had never seen a more diverse array of threats confronting the United States around the world—never in his

50 years of experience. So we are simply asking our military and our national security personnel to do too much with too little.

It is no surprise that Secretary of Defense James Mattis said last June that “for all the heartache caused by the loss of our troops during [our] wars [abroad], no enemy in this field has done more to harm the readiness of our military than sequestration.”

More recently, General Mattis said that so far our continuing resolutions have not done even greater damage to our readiness thanks to certain additional or supplemental funding that we voted on. But at the same time, he soberly cautioned that there could be real impact—and it won’t be positive, it will be negative—if the problem persists and if the Department of Defense doesn’t have a real budget sometime this month.

His remarks echo that of practically every service chief. Together, their views mean we have to act. I don’t know who else we would listen to if we are not going to listen to the Secretary of Defense and our service chiefs when it comes to national security because that is their job, and we ought to take their advice and heed their counsel.

Cuts in defense spending have real consequences. Much less money is available for training and necessary maintenance, for example. The length of deployments for our troops grows, and our soldiers are stretched thin. Our military is forced to operate beyond its normal capabilities.

The former Air Force Chief of Staff recently described the Air Force as the smallest, oldest equipped, and least ready force across the full spectrum of operations in our service history. Those are chilling remarks—or should be. More than half of all Marine Corps fixed and rotary-wing aircraft were unable to fly by the end of 2016. I have no doubt that we can turn that around very quickly if Congress were to step up to its responsibilities and adequately fund the military, but that is the status quo unless we act. The Navy fleet currently stands at 275 of the 350 ship requirement. Of our 58 Army brigade combat teams, only 3—3 out of 58—are ready for combat.

Our enemies shouldn’t take any comfort in these numbers because, as I said, the United States always pulls together and Congress always acts when they see a national emergency. But it shouldn’t take an emergency for us to do our job and to make sure that our military is adequately funded and is ready to fight. As General Brooks in Seoul, South Korea, said, their motto is “ready to fight tonight.” That is the kind of world we live in.

Last summer was the perfect example of why, when we draw attention to these numbers, we are not just blowing smoke. Operational accidents in the South Pacific exposed our readiness failures in a dramatic fashion and in a tragic fashion. Ten sailors died when the USS *John S. McCain* collided with a

600-foot merchant vessel off the coast of Singapore. Seven sailors died when the *Fitzgerald* collided with another vessel off the coast of Japan. And the USS *Lake Champlain* collided with a boat near Korea—although thankfully that time no lives were lost. This ought to be a wake-up call to all of us.

Many have drawn credible correlations between these accidents that have taken the lives of our military servicemembers and our readiness failures, citing studies like the 2015 independent investigation by the Government Accountability Office. That study determined that the Navy’s mandate to keep ships afloat in the Pacific was shortchanging crew training and degrading the condition of our ships—in other words, additional readiness failures.

These accidents, by the way, are happening at the same time our national security threats are not going away, as General Clapper’s comments would indicate.

We have seen North Korea continue to improve its nuclear and long-range ballistic missile capabilities beyond the estimates of our intelligence community—much faster—and detonate what is widely considered to be a hydrogen bomb recently.

We have seen large-scale protests in Iran—and I hope they continue—exposing the instability of a regime that continues to use its proxies to advance its aims throughout the broader Middle East; in other words, the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism—Iran. We ought to encourage the people of Iran to continue to rise up in protest and to change the regime there into one that does not prey on its neighbors in the region.

We have seen a growing China—something that more and more people are realizing is a threat. I know that when we deal with countries like China, frequently we deal with them in the commercial context where we see a business that hires people and we see investments here in the United States. But what we need to recognize is that they don’t do business the way the United States does business. Sitting at the top of every company in China, in the board room of every Chinese company, is the Communist Party. They operate on an all-of-government basis. And it is not just the government; it is also what we would consider the private sector. But, in truth, there is no private sector in China; it is all an arm of the government. It is posing a rising threat to American wages and labor as they erode our industrial base by stealing our technology. And because of loopholes in the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States—the so-called CFIUS process—they are now able to tailor financial arrangements through joint ventures and others in a way to capture our dual-purpose, cutting-edge technology. They then copy it in China and erode our defense industrial base here in the United States, along with the jobs that go with it. So

it is a very real and present threat to American wages and workers. It is a threat to our intellectual property edge and the innovation that we are the best in the world at, but they are all too eager to steal it, copy it, and to harm the jobs and the investment in those businesses here in the United States.

Of course, when it comes to China, there is the threat to human rights in nondemocratic nations like Venezuela and Zimbabwe, which China often has no qualms supporting.

With this diverse array of dangers, we simply can’t afford to straitjacket our military by arbitrarily cutting the amount of money we appropriate to fund it. But that is what is going to happen unless we act—and act quickly. The current continuing resolution expires on the 19th of this month.

The truth is, even if we are able to come up with negotiated budget caps for defense and nondefense spending, we are probably going to have to have a short-term continuing resolution to give the Appropriations Committees time to put that into bill text. In other words, we can’t just snap our fingers once the decision has been made. It is going to take some time to actually put it on paper.

The bottom line is, if we want to return to having the strong military that we have always had, if we want to continue to lead in the world, if we want to continue to be a force for peace and stability, we have to maintain our military strength. That was the lesson we had to learn again during the last administration when we saw America retreat from its leadership in the world.

There are countries, tyrants, bullies, and dictators all too willing to fill the void left by American retreat, and one way we retreat is when we don’t fund the readiness of our military, when we are not “ready to fight tonight,” as General Brooks has said, and we need to start with ending this cycle of continuing resolutions and defense sequestration.

So I come to the floor today to call on my colleagues from all across this Chamber, but specifically across the aisle, to quit holding our military hostage to other unrelated demands, and I urge this body to come together in agreement on new budget caps as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## CHIP AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about an issue that is critical to patients and families in my home State of Washington and across the country. Today, parents are wondering if they will be able to get the healthcare their kids need, and communities are wondering if they will be able to provide it.

That is unacceptable.

Congress has to swiftly and fully restore the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, and funding for other services families need, like community health centers, which have been waiting more than 100 days for a long-term solution. They should do so without making deep cuts to successful prevention programs in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that tackle avoidable conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

Democrats have wanted to get this done for months. By focusing on pushing through partisan tax reform at the end of the year, Republicans instead put massive corporations and the wealthiest ahead of making sure our children and their families have the healthcare they need. I hope they are now ready to give these issues their full and immediate attention. In case they aren't, I want to make sure they know exactly what this is about.

It is about children like Stella. Stella lives in Washington State. She is 5 years old. She has two brothers. She has a love of the outdoors, especially swimming and kayaking. She has a typical kindergartner's boundless energy and excitement. But Stella was born with spina bifida, an issue with how her spinal cord was formed. In the past year of dealing with that condition, Stella's family went through 5 catheters a day, almost 2,000 in total. They went on 10 different occasions to have MRI scans. They went to get her new leg braces. Given the cost of all that, they went through their \$5,000 deductible in the first 5 weeks of the year. That is right. It took just 5 weeks. Additionally, this year Stella is also scheduled to have bladder and kidney surgery.

As one can imagine, the expenses are really adding up. Even with both parents working, covering Stella's healthcare needs would be an unimaginable task. Fortunately, Stella does qualify for health insurance through CHIP. CHIP has helped her family afford the treatment she needs, including physical therapy.

Stella's story is just one of many examples of families who rely on this program. There are 60,000 children in Washington State who are now insured through CHIP. Nine million families nationwide rely on it to help address the healthcare needs of their children. Yet Congress has taken over 102 days and counting to restore it. There is no excuse for this inaction.

Families who rely on the CHIP Program are not alone in needing our immediate attention. Thanks to CHIP

and Medicaid, the uninsured rate among children is now at an all-time low. Jeopardizing this accomplishment by letting CHIP twist in the wind is simply unacceptable. This Republican-controlled Congress has also failed to renew other investments that our families rely on for the care they need—programs such as community health centers, which serve 25 million patients, particularly in our rural and poorer communities; the National Health Service Corps, which brings doctors and other healthcare providers to underserved areas through scholarships and loan repayment; and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program, which brings primary care and dental residencies to communities in need. Leaving these programs without long-term extensions a minute longer is utterly irresponsible because this lack of certainty for them is already bringing a negative impact on our communities.

For example, the Northeast Washington Health Programs serve some of the most rural areas in my State, including Ferry County, which has fewer than four people per square mile. They are struggling to hire needed medical staff and managers because of this uncertainty that is now there. Ferry County cannot wait.

The Community Health Association of Spokane runs 12 health center sites and sees more than 70,000 patients a year. They recently began offering very much needed opioid addiction treatment. If Congress does not reauthorize the community health center funding, those efforts will be jeopardized and expansions will be halted. Spokane cannot wait.

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services served over 22,000 patients in 2016. Almost all of those patients were below 200 percent of the Federal poverty line.

If Congress does not act soon, three different clinics, including a clinic in one of the poorest cities in Washington, will be at risk. Yakima cannot wait.

I have heard additional stories of similar hardships from across my State. North Olympic Healthcare Network has had to put expansions on behavioral healthcare on hold. Another health center in Washington may have to reconsider building a new children's dental residency program. A center serving Whatcom County may have to cancel a project for medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare facilities as well.

Across the country there are a lot of examples for community health centers just like the ones I mentioned. Healthcare that people of all ages and backgrounds rely on is being put in jeopardy, all because Republicans prioritized tax cuts for those at the top before the health needs of millions of people at the end of last year.

It is far past time to show these families that we are willing to work to get this done. We need to give them the peace of mind that they can get the

healthcare they need. They deserve that.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON pertaining to the introduction of S. 2292 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. NELSON. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## DACA

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I rise today to stand up for the hundreds of thousands of young immigrants known as Dreamers, whose lives President Trump has thrown into terrifying uncertainty.

Immigrant communities have long helped write the economic, social, and cultural story of my home State of New Mexico and, for that matter, the entire Nation. That is certainly true for Dreamers, undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children and are vital members of communities across New Mexico.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of meeting many of New Mexico's estimated 7,000 Dreamers. I have met with students who grew up here and are now striving to become doctors, scientists, teachers, and even serve in our military. These young people are our children's classmates. They are our next-door neighbors. They are our colleagues. They are family members, and many are truly rising stars. In fact, I would argue that these Dreamers are the future of a great America.

Every day these young people add to the strength of our economy, to the vitality of our country. More than 97 percent of DACA recipients are in school or in the workforce.

The DACA Program allowed them to work legally, to get driver's licenses, to go to college, to serve in our military and give back to their communities. DACA helped almost 70 percent of recipients secure a job with better pay, and better pay leads to real investments in our communities and our economy.

After their DACA applications were approved, nearly two-thirds of recipients reported buying their first car, and almost one in six reported buying a new home. DACA recipients also paid billions of dollars in Federal, State, and local taxes. Why on Earth would

we kick out these contributors to our economy and our country?

The economic impact of removing nearly 700,000 workers from the U.S. workforce would be staggering. It would cost our economy nearly half a trillion dollars in GDP loss over the next decade. But passing the Dream Act could add an estimated \$281 billion to the U.S. economy over the next 10 years. That, to me, sounds like putting America first.

I stand with these Dreamers, and I always have. One of my first actions when I was in the House of Representatives was to sign on as an original cosponsor of the Dream Act, which would create a pathway to legal status and citizenship for Dreamers who pursue higher education or serve our Nation in uniform. This commonsense, compassionate, and responsible policy is long overdue for a generation of young Americans.

Since President Trump made the heartless decision to end DACA, I have held his administration accountable for their mishandling of renewal applications for DACA recipients. My office has assisted Dreamers in New Mexico through the DACA renewal process and is actively participating in meetings with communities and local advocacy groups throughout the State.

I introduced legislation to safeguard Dreamers' private information, such as addresses and telephone numbers, so the Trump administration can't use those to target them or their families for deportation.

When my office learned that the Department of Homeland Security had arbitrarily rejected hundreds of renewal applications that arrived late because they were delayed by the Postal Service, I pressed the administration to take immediate action to reverse its decision. I am pleased to say that Dreamers whose applications were rejected due to Postal Service delays were allowed to resubmit their renewals for DACA. In fact, just last week, the first two DACA recipients in New Mexico, who brought this to my attention with the help of Catholic Charities, were told that they could move forward with their DACA renewal applications.

President Trump's decision means that until Congress passes the Dream Act, these young members of our communities still face deep uncertainty about whether they will be able to stay in school, keep working and contributing to our economy, and remain in the Nation that they call home.

Congress must pass the Dream Act now. Threatening to deport these young people who grew up in America and want to contribute to their Nation will not fix our broken immigration system. Making the American people foot the bill to build an unnecessary and wasteful border wall—which families in New Mexico's border communities have told me they do not want nor do they need—will not fix our broken immigration system.

President Trump and congressional Republicans wasted an entire year trying to take away American's healthcare and then rushing through tax breaks for the superwealthy in the final weeks of the year. By squandering an entire year, they pushed Dreamers aside and put their lives in jeopardy.

I voted to fund the government through the holidays in hopes that Congress could finally reach an agreement to pass the Dream Act. We also urgently need to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, fix wildfire disaster funding, provide disaster relief for Puerto Rico, which is still recovering from Hurricane Maria. Taking care of these long-neglected and bipartisan priorities is the bare minimum of governance. Republican leaders in Congress need to take this opportunity seriously, especially if they expect our support.

I will be fighting every step of the way to pass the Dream Act, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

Since President Trump shamefully pulled the rug out from under Dreamers when he hastily ended the DACA Program, I have spent time meeting with Dreamers in New Mexico, as well as here in Washington. You cannot hear their stories without realizing how morally bankrupt the administration's current policy is. It is impossible for me to convey the desperation and the fear they are feeling every day that passes without our passing the Dream Act.

Now is the time to give these young Americans a permanent place in this great Nation. Enough is enough. Their patience has worn thin with the President and congressional Republicans using them as political bargaining chips. It is immoral to play politics with the lives of these young Americans.

I will say it again. Congress absolutely must pass the Dream Act, and we have an opportunity to do it now.

We should not stop once we pass the Dream Act. Leaders in Congress have waited far too long to finally address our Nation's overall broken immigration system. I still continue to believe that our Nation urgently needs Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, which includes a visa program that meets the needs of our economy. It is a tough but fair path to earn citizenship for the estimated 11 million people in our country who are undocumented and a plan that ensures community safety and security at our borders.

When I think about immigration, I always wonder how different my own life would be if America had turned my father away when he immigrated here as a young boy. Our Nation's enduring spirit has been built by the hard work and the dreams of so many striving young immigrants like my father in the 1930s and like so many Dreamers today. No Member of Congress should be able to rest until Dreamers are able

to rest easy, knowing they will be able to stay and to contribute to literally the only Nation they have ever called home.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, just last week we began the second session of the 115th Congress. We are now safely into 2018, and we should be talking about what we can accomplish for the American people in the new year. We simply face a long list of unfinished business from 2017—last year—and, unfortunately, we have a very short window in which to get it done.

We are 4 months into fiscal year 2018, and we still don't have a budget deal. I am vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee. We should have had this done long before now. Our agencies are operating under last year's funding levels. They have little flexibility to handle the problems they face today.

We still haven't reauthorized the Children's Health Insurance Program, what we call CHIP, so that puts the healthcare of 9 million children at risk. These are American children.

Nearly 800,000 Dreamers live under uncertainty and fear of deportation, living in the country they have known most of their lives. I don't know how anybody, Republican or Democrat, could call this acceptable.

Now, I know the Republicans control the House, they control the Senate, and they control the White House. They are in charge. They have to show responsibility and show leadership on these issues, but instead of addressing these issues, last year the Republican leadership spent time rolling back sensible regulations designed to protect the American consumer, designed to protect our environment, and designed to protect people from harassment in the workplace. They rolled those all back, and then they passed a massive tax cut for big corporations and the wealthiest of Americans.

We Democrats have been calling for bipartisan budget talks since June—7 months ago. We have passed three continuing resolutions since September of last year to give us more time to strike a deal on the budget and Dreamers and CHIP and disaster funding. These are just to name a few, but they are enormously important to the people who are experiencing the disasters or who have children who need healthcare or who are Dreamers. Yet, on the 102nd day of the fiscal year, there are only 9 days until the next fiscal cliff, and we don't have a budget deal.

President Trump said months ago that the country could use a good government shutdown. I don't agree with



him, but I am beginning to think that is exactly what his party is angling for—a manufactured crisis to distract from the fact that they are not doing their job.

The Washington Post seemed to confirm this last December, when it reported the President privately told people that a government shutdown would be good for him politically. In all of my years in the Senate—I have been here under Republican and Democratic Presidents alike—I have never heard such damaging rhetoric come from the President of the United States.

Nobody wants a government shutdown—nobody. It is devastating to people not only throughout the government but to people throughout the whole country. However, that seems to be what they are vying for.

For months, I have been calling for a bipartisan budget deal that is based on parity—equal increases for defense and nondefense programs—that would provide relief from sequestration. I agree with the Republicans and Democrats who say military readiness has suffered under sequestration but so has our Nation's economy, so has our educational system, so has our infrastructure, and so has our care for our veterans.

If we want to combat the problems caused by sequestration, we have to raise the caps on both sides of the ledger. Fixing one side of the equation will not address the needs of our Nation and, even worse, will actually short-change our military.

If we don't invest in our economy, if we don't invest in the education of our youth, the military will not have expert, qualified soldiers, the men and women on whom they rely. If we don't invest in our diplomacy, our Nation and the world become less safe. If we don't improve our cyber security defenses and our physical infrastructure, we become soft targets for those who would do us harm, both in this country and outside this country. If we don't care for our veterans, we are not going to have young men and women who are willing to serve.

This week, the majority leader came to the floor making the case for increased defense spending. He asked us to listen to our nonpartisan military leaders about what they think is needed to keep this country safe. I couldn't agree more.

To that end, I have two letters signed by a combined 560 retired admirals, generals, and other former military members. I ask unanimous consent to have these letters printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

I have no idea what these admirals', generals', and others' political parties are, but they make the case that we have to increase our investment in domestic priorities—including education and childcare, as well as diplomacy—if we are going to keep our country safe and support our military. Secretary of Defense Mattis said even more bluntly: If we do not fully fund the State De-

partment, we should be prepared to buy more ammunition for our military.

The wisdom of our military leaders notwithstanding, Republicans appear to be dug in. They claim equal increases for both defense and nondefense programs would add too much to our deficit and burden our children. It is one over the other. It is hard to have somebody say that with a straight face in the wake of the President signing a tax bill to add \$1.5 trillion to our Nation's debt and to benefit primarily large corporations and the wealthiest Americans. You can't make the argument that we can't afford to take care of our domestic needs. It is simply not credible.

Budget negotiations are not the only place where Republicans haven't engaged in a productive way. President Trump's decision to end the DACA Program has put nearly 800,000 Dreamers in this country in an untenable position. The decision was as cruel as it was senseless. It may make a tweet that people look at, but if you are one of those Dreamers and you are on your way to school and are expecting a scholarship to college and you don't know if you are going to be in this country tomorrow, that is not a tweet.

The President should have worked with Congress. He should have found a permanent legislative solution while keeping DACA protections in place. I believe he terminated the program under false pretenses, yielding to xenophobic voices in his administration, and last night a Federal judge issued an order that said just that: Terminating DACA was not required under the law—far from it. But a court order that only temporarily halts the administration from dismantling DACA provides little comfort to Dreamers. They live each and every day uncertain of the future and with fear of deportation.

Now, I have heard Members of the Senate trying to decide at what time we are going to finish voting for the week. Their big fear is this: Are we going to make our flight home?

Dreamers have to worry if their flight is going to be out of this country and back to a country they don't even know. They worry if they will have to leave the country they know and love.

Dreamers are Americans in every way, except on paper. They were brought here as children, through no fault of their own. They are law-abiding members of our community. They attend school. They serve as doctors and teachers. They defend our homeland as brave men and women in uniform.

This is a crisis of the President's own making. Now, Congress needs to pick up the pieces. I hope, after the meeting yesterday, we will be allowed to pick up the pieces. We have spent months trying to find a path forward, but you can't find one if the administration keeps moving the goalposts.

We need to address the fate of the Dreamers now. You can take a poll in this country. The American people

want us to. Also, look at the broad bipartisan support on display yesterday at the White House. Republicans and Democrats want to fix the mess that the President created. A solution should be within our grasp.

The White House has made unreasonable demands, such as \$18 billion of American tax dollars to build a wall on the southern border, in exchange for Dreamers. The \$18 billion wall is last century's solution. It does nothing for this century.

If they really believe Mexico is going to pay for it, I have a solution. Open a bank account and, as Mexico sends us money, then use it to build a wall. Don't ask the American taxpayers, who are strapped at home, to pay for something the President says the Mexicans will pay for. Open an account, find out if they are telling the truth, let the money come into the account, and then build it.

But, worse, don't use the Dreamers as negotiable commodities. They are not commodities. They are human beings. They are people who deserve to have their dreams. Let's pass a bill—we could do it this week—protecting Dreamers now. Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the White House. This is their government.

We have a week and a half before the next continuing resolution expires. We have a lot to do. Let's get serious. Let's get to work. I am willing to work here every day, every night, right through the weekend. Let's get it done. We are not doing it for us. We are doing it for all the American people. Let's do it for all the American people—not for special interests, not for one party. Let's do it for all the American people. It could be done, if we want to.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MISSION: READINESS,  
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA,  
May 30, 2017.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: As retired admirals and generals, we know from our experience that no matter how much we spend to build our military and procure the latest and greatest technology, we will never be a secure nation if we do not have qualified and skilled men and women to fill the ranks of our Armed Forces. Therefore, investing in education for our youngest children, which is the foundation of our future national security, is essential. Accordingly, we urge Congress to prioritize investments in early childhood programs, including funding for Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and Preschool Development Grants in FY18 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

Mission: Readiness is the national security organization of retired top military leaders that recognize the strength of our military depends on our people. The stunning fact is that today, 71 percent of young adults ages 17 to 24 cannot qualify for military service because they are too poorly educated, medically or physically unfit, or have a disqualifying record of crime or drug abuse. If these issues are not addressed, the Nation risks a shortage of qualified recruits—one that will leave the country vulnerable for years to come.



Mounting research shows that the early years of life have an incredible impact on educational attainment, behaviors and health. High-quality early interventions can help vulnerable children succeed in school, stay on the right side of the law and achieve a healthy weight in the long-term. These outcomes open the doors for many career paths, including military service.

Long-term studies of early education programs show impressive differences in children's educational outcomes. A recent analysis of Head Start outcomes, comparing siblings who did versus did not attend the program, found participants showing increased probability of graduating from high school, attending college, and receiving a postsecondary credential. High-quality state preschool programs have also demonstrated lasting effects on students' elementary-school performance. New Jersey's preschool program, for example, found that children in the program were three-quarters of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in literacy in the fourth and fifth grades.

While Congress faces tough spending choices ahead to secure and protect our Nation, we know that the backbone of our military is, and will always be, our women and men in uniform. As a matter of national security, in order to grow the pool of eligible recruits, Congress must prioritize investments in early childhood programs, including funding for Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and Preschool Development Grants.

Signed by a combined 424 retired admirals, generals, and other former military members.

FEBRUARY 27, 2017.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,  
*Speaker of the House,*  
*House of Representatives.*  
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
*Minority Leader,*  
*House of Representatives.*  
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
*Majority Leader,*  
*U.S. Senate.*

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,  
*Minority Leader,*  
*U.S. Senate.*

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN, MINORITY LEADER PELOSI, MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, AND MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER: As you and your colleagues address the federal budget for Fiscal Year 2018, we write as retired three and four star flag and general officers from all branches of the armed services to share our strong conviction that elevating and strengthening diplomacy and development alongside defense are critical to keeping America safe.

We know from our service in uniform that many of the crises our nation faces do not have military solutions alone—from confronting violent extremist groups like ISIS in the Middle East and North Africa to preventing pandemics like Ebola and stabilizing weak and fragile states that can lead to greater instability. There are 65 million displaced people today, the most since World War II, with consequences including refugee flows that are threatening America's strategic allies in Israel, Jordan, Turkey, and Europe.

The State Department, USAID, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Peace Corps and other development agencies are critical to preventing conflict and reducing the need to put our men and women in uniform in harm's way. As Secretary James Mattis said while Commander of U.S. Central Command, "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition." The military will lead the fight against ter-

rorism on the battlefield, but it needs strong civilian partners in the battle against the drivers of extremism—lack of opportunity, insecurity, injustice, and hopelessness.

We recognize that America's strategic investments in diplomacy and development—like all of U.S. investments—must be effective and accountable. Significant reforms have been undertaken since 9/11, many of which have been embodied in recent legislation in Congress with strong bipartisan support—on human trafficking, the rights of women and girls, trade and energy in Africa, wildlife trafficking, water, food security, and transparency and accountability.

We urge you to ensure that resources for the International Affairs Budget keep pace with the growing global threats and opportunities we face. Now is not the time to retreat.

cc: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.  
cc: Secretary of Defense James Mattis.  
cc: National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster.

Signed by a combined 121 retired admirals, generals, and other former military members.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, my colleague from Vermont, Senator BERNIE SANDERS, wrote what I feel was a terrific op-ed about why we should not and do not need to close down the government, why we can do our work and why we should, and that people rely on us, too.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the op-ed be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 8, 2018]

IT'S ON REPUBLICANS TO STOP A SHUTDOWN  
(By Bernie Sanders)

I do not know why President Trump and the Republican Party—which controls the White House, the Senate and the House—are so willing to shut down the government. Maybe they think it will be good for them politically. Maybe they believe the chaos created by a government shutdown would be a welcome distraction from the ongoing Russia investigation being conducted by special counsel Robert S. Mueller III. Whatever the motives of the Republican leadership, one thing is clear: A government shutdown would be disastrous for the American people.

A shutdown would harm tens of millions of working-class families who would be unable to access vital services. It would disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands of federal employees who would not receive the paychecks they expected. It would endanger members of the U.S. military who are putting their lives on the line defending our nation.

Congress has a responsibility to the American people to prevent a shutdown and work in a bipartisan manner to reach a fair budget agreement that addresses the very serious problems facing the working people of our country.

Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) ratcheted up threats of a government shutdown last week by insisting on ending the long-standing, bipartisan agreement over parity for defense and non-defense spending. This principle of parity is enormously important for working families and is something that cannot be terminated. If we do not act, funding for education, child care, health care, nutrition assistance, affordable housing and other important domestic programs will be at a 40-year low as a percentage of our economy.

As the middle class continues to shrink, cuts to non-defense spending would cause even worse economic pain to working families, the elderly, children, the sick and the most vulnerable. Meanwhile, as Trump and the Republicans demand an unbelievable \$100 billion increase in military spending over the next two years, the Defense Department has been inoculated from budget cuts over the past several years because of the Overseas Contingency Operations loophole—a special account not subject to spending caps established by Congress in 2011.

Providing parity in these budget negotiations means, among other things, fully funding—without offsets—the Children's Health Insurance Program for 9 million kids and community health centers for 27 million Americans. It means increased funding for the Social Security Administration and the Veterans Administration so they can provide guaranteed benefits to seniors and veterans who have earned them. It means keeping our obligations to more than 1.5 million workers and retirees who are about to lose a large part of the pensions they were promised. It means addressing the crisis of student debt, expanding child care, improving our crumbling infrastructure in rural America and protecting our national parks. It means providing help in the national struggle against opioid and heroin addiction.

Furthermore, as part of the budget negotiations, we must also provide adequate disaster relief to Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as well as assistance to the Western states recovering from terrible wildfires.

Finally, Trump added even more fuel to the fire when he decided to use 800,000 "dreamers" as a bargaining chip for an \$18 billion wall that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not want. These dreamers are young people who have lived in this country for almost their entire lives. They go to school. They work. They serve in the U.S. military. The United States is their home; they know no other. For Trump and the Republican leadership to allow their legal status to expire, and to subject them to deportation, would be one of the cruelest acts in modern American history. It must not be allowed to happen.

This is not just my viewpoint. It's what the American people want. A recent Quinnipiac University poll showed that 77 percent of the American people, including a large majority of Republicans, support providing legal protections for the dreamers. The Republican Congress must act. A clean Dream Act must be signed into law as part of any budget agreement.

The American people are increasingly disgusted with a government that protects the interests of the wealthy and the powerful, while ignoring the needs of the vulnerable. The U.S. government must do more than provide huge tax breaks to billionaires, callously deport young people, greatly expand military spending, end net neutrality, deny the reality of climate change and threaten to cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education and nutrition programs. We must pass a budget agreement that addresses the needs of Americans and not just billionaire campaign contributors.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TAX REFORM

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, when we were debating the tax relief law at the end of last year, it was a very familiar debate in many ways.

Republicans came to the floor with facts and figures on how much extra money people were going to see in their pockets and their paychecks. Democrats came to the floor with the same old tired line that you always hear them talk about—the millionaires and billionaires.

Republicans pointed out economic studies that showed that workers right now pay more than 70 percent of the cost of corporate taxes. We talked about a study by the Tax Foundation that predicted that if we passed the tax relief bill, the average family would actually see a gain of about \$2,600 a year in their after-tax income. It was partly because of getting the tax cut and partly because their employers would then pass on much of the tax cut in higher wages. Democrats didn't believe it. They said that only rich people would benefit and that businesses would never share their tax savings with the workers. The Democratic leader said that "tax cuts like these benefit the wealthy and the powerful to the exclusion of the middle class."

Here we are. It is the month after we passed the tax relief bill, the tax reduction bill, and the tax simplification bill, and the question is, Who was right? The very day the tax bill passed in Congress, AT&T came out and said it was giving its workers a bonus. It said that 200,000 hard-working employees were going to get an extra \$1,000 each directly because of the new tax relief, tax reduction, tax cut bill. The Tax Foundation predicted that they would eventually get an extra \$2,600, and these people are already getting \$1,000 each on day one.

That has opened the floodgates to other companies doing the exact same thing and employees around the country experiencing the exact same thing. Businesses started sharing the tax savings with rank-and-file, middle-class workers, and it started on day one—not just the wealthy and the powerful, as Senator SCHUMER has predicted. Over 120 companies have said they are raising wages, giving out bonuses, and investing in their workers because of the tax law. It adds up to over \$980 million—\$980 million in the pockets of hard-working men and women around the country. How many people are seeing that? By last count, almost 1 million hard-working Americans—over 970,000 hard-working Americans have already gotten the good news.

There is more good news coming every day, with more announcements today. It is exactly what Republicans said would happen. It is happening for people who work at banks, who work at insurance companies, who work at airlines. It is happening for people who work at big companies, such as AT&T, Visa, and Comcast, but it is also happening for people who work at smaller companies, such as a winery in California and an aviation company in Texas. These are businesses and people in communities who are important parts of their communities and doing important jobs. The employees work hard, and now they are getting a share of the relief the Republicans had predicted they would get all along. And they are not just getting cash bonuses. There is a bank in Massachusetts called Berkshire Hills Bancorp. They announced last week that the people working there will be getting a \$1,000 bonus and will also see the minimum wage raised to \$15 an hour.

More is being invested in employee development and training programs. When you invest more in employee development and training programs, that means people are going to have additional skills that make them even more productive, better at their jobs, and qualify for even higher wages.

This bank in Massachusetts is also contributing an extra \$2 million to its charitable efforts, including scholarships. That helps improve the communities where the workers live and where they raise their families.

Democrats said it is not going to happen. It has happened. It is happening every day. They said that businesses would keep the money for themselves. That is not what we are seeing all across the country.

Ms. WARREN, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, went on PBS. The senior Senator from Massachusetts said that the idea that tax relief would lead to higher wages was, in her words, "the big lie that Republicans have been selling" for decades. She said that tax relief was "an insult to working families across America."

I would point out to Senator WARREN that many of the people who work at this bank are in her home State of Massachusetts. People have gotten wage increases. People have gotten additional money spent on training so they can become more valuable and make even more money. People have seen the minimum wage in that business go up. The workers getting these bonuses and raises in their pay are her constituents. Does she think these people are feeling insulted? Does she believe they have been insulted by getting a \$1,000 bonus and getting an increase in their salaries and having investments in terms of additional training? Is that an insult to those people? I don't think so. I bet they are feeling pretty glad to be supported and valued by their employer.

There is another business in Nevada, South Point Casino. Workers there are

receiving \$1 million total in bonuses. Previously, this business had actually planned to increase the share of health insurance costs that its employees would have to pay because health insurance costs have gone up.

Health insurance prices have skyrocketed ever since ObamaCare was passed. Companies have struggled with how to deal with these rising costs. Many have tried to pass these on to the employees.

This company in Nevada has said that because of the Republican tax relief law, they are canceling their plans to raise insurance costs—canceling their plans to raise the costs. That is more money in employees' pockets. The owner of the business said: "We want to be sure that our extended family is taken care of." That is the way these people think of the people who work for them—as part of their extended family. That is how employers are responding to tax relief all around the country, and that is what we said would happen.

We also predicted that one way businesses might deal with lower taxes would be to cut prices for consumers, let people who use their services or buy their products keep more of their hard-earned money. Americans are starting to see that prediction come true in the form of lower utility bills. Gas, electric, and water utilities across the country are getting ready to cut their rates because the taxes are going down under the law. Customers of the power company in Baltimore are going to receive millions of dollars in the form of lower rates. It has been a cold winter on the east coast, and a lower electric bill is going to be good news for a lot of people in that area. Customers are also likely to see the same thing in Missouri, South Carolina, and Louisiana.

These are the kinds of effects we are seeing all across the country, in various ways. It is all good news for consumers, all good news for people at home as a result of the tax reduction, tax relief, tax cuts passed by Republicans and signed by President Trump.

Americans are getting the benefits of tax relief. They are getting the benefit of regulatory relief and the pro-growth policies of Republicans in Congress and the Trump administration. People are seeing it in their daily lives. The polling company Gallup said that as soon as Donald Trump was elected President, economic confidence in this country soared. That is what the polls found. It has stayed positive almost without interruption ever since. It is the exact opposite of what polls were showing during the previous 8 years, in the previous administration. That was during the so-called economic recovery.

Why are people so optimistic now? It is because you can't open a newspaper or turn on a television without seeing more good news about the economy. New employment numbers came out last Friday. CNN had a headline: "U.S.

economy added 2 million jobs in 2017.” The Washington Post’s headline was “Trump’s first-year jobs numbers were very, very good.” Bloomberg reported that the Christmas shopping season was “probably the best one in a decade.” People are feeling confident. They are seeing higher wages, they are seeing cash bonuses, and soon they will start seeing the tax cut in their paychecks.

The American people know that Republicans have kept our promise. We are cutting regulations, cutting taxes, putting more money back in their pockets. That is what hard-working Americans have asked us to do, and that is what we are going to continue to do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the positive impact the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will have on Iowa farmers.

Of course, our Iowa agricultural economy is really important, and those men and women who are serving as farmers, ranchers, and growers in the State of Iowa mean the world to me, coming from a farm my family had in Southwest Iowa.

We all understand this has been a very challenging time for farmers in our rural communities. The community I come from in Southwest Iowa has just 10,000 people in our county. Many of them have faced the challenges of the economic downturn. Since their peaks in 2012, corn prices have declined by 60 percent and soybean prices have declined by 47 percent. My neighbors are hurting, folks. Farm income has nearly been cut in half since 2013.

A lot of our producers are hurting, especially our young and beginning farmers who have gotten their start just in maybe the last 10 years or so, but, fortunately for our farmers, our ranchers, and our growers, tax relief is on its way. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will provide sweeping tax cuts for farmers and rural communities, allowing our producers to keep more of those hard-earned dollars.

About 95 percent of farms are organized as passthrough businesses, such as sole proprietorships, partnerships, and S corps. These businesses are taxed under individual tax rules and will benefit from lower tax rates for every income bracket. On top of that, they will see significant relief through a new 20-percent deduction on passthrough business income. The law also provides relief from the costly individual mandate which forced many farmers to choose between buying an expensive ObamaCare plan through their State exchange or being fined.

Now, just a couple of years ago, I remember a very intense conversation I had with a beginning farmer in Northeast Iowa. When he was purchasing his insurance through the State exchange, the cost had more than doubled. He was shaking he was so upset about it, and he explained to me the additional cost of that individual policy was his truck payment. There was no room in his budget for the additional cost of that insurance policy so he had to make that choice: Do I purchase through the individual exchange or do I make my truck payment? Fortunately, within this bill, we have that relief. He can make that choice, and the choice is his on whether he makes that truck payment and forgoes the insurance or whether now he can do without that type of insurance and not be fined because he was too poor to afford it.

In addition, the bill dramatically expands section 179 expensing and allows 5 years of 100 bonus depreciation. Both of these changes will foster much needed investment in farms throughout Iowa.

The law also preserves a number of important tax provisions for farmers, including the interest deduction, cash accounting, and the use of like-kind exchanges for property.

Last, but certainly not least, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act doubles the Federal estate tax exemption while preserving the stepped-up basis. The death tax can have a devastating impact on family farms. Over 90 percent of farm assets cannot be sold easily without losing value. Especially as we continue to experience a downturn in that ag economy, family farmers are sometimes left with no choice but to sell land or the equipment they use to farm that land when they are forced to pay that tax.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is a big step in the right direction for agriculture. I am thankful to the President for his leadership and to my colleagues in the Senate and the House for helping get this long-needed bill done. On behalf of agriculture, thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise to highlight the positive impacts our historic tax reform law will have on the agricultural community.

Agriculture is Arkansas’ largest industry by far, adding \$16 billion to our economy every year and accounting for approximately one in every six jobs. We are the top rice-producing State in the Nation, No. 2 in the Nation in broiler chicken production, and the third largest producer of catfish in the United States. We could also clothe

and shelter ourselves from fiber grown in Arkansas, as we are the third in the Nation in cotton production and the fifth largest softwood lumber-producing State. You could keep going down the list, and you would find Arkansas as one of the Nation’s top 10 producers of a number of agricultural commodities.

Clearly, ensuring that Washington helps create an economic environment that allows the agricultural industry to thrive is extremely important to my home State of Arkansas. When President Trump signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act into law, his signature provided much needed tax relief to America’s farmers. More than 94 percent of farms are organized as passthrough businesses, which means they are impacted by the same tax provisions as individual filers. Lower tax rates across the board and a 20-percent deduction from their taxable income means immediate savings, which can be reinvested to help grow their operations.

Ninety seven percent of the farms in Arkansas are family owned, and the vast majority of them will now be exempt from the estate tax—the death tax. This is a big deal. It will help keep those farms and ranches in the family for generations to come.

Finally, farmers and ranchers will be able to expense 100 percent of their capital investments, such as equipment, over the next 4 years. In his address to the Farm Bureau earlier this week, the President called this the “sleeper” in the bill. He is right. People don’t realize and there hasn’t been enough talk about how beneficial this provision will be for our family-run agricultural operations. The substance of the President’s Farm Bureau speech tilted heavily toward our efforts to bring stability and predictability to the economy.

As we have witnessed over the course of the previous administration, uncertainty is devastating to our economy. There are few industries that are inherently more affected by uncertainty than agriculture. This is why we have taken steps to eliminate some of the punitive, needless regulations that create uncertainty for our farmers and our ranchers.

It is also why my colleagues and I on the Agriculture Committee, under the steadfast leadership of Chairman ROBERTS, are working hard to reauthorize the farm bill. Programs are authorized by the farm bill that are absolutely vital to farmers, ranchers, and consumers. These programs will provide more certainty in rural America to address the challenges ahead. Finally, it is why we took great care to ensure that the agricultural industry will see the benefits of tax reform. Establishing a tax code that works for our farmers and ranchers, as opposed to against them, is vital to their ability to plan for the future and invigorate our rural communities.

I am proud of our efforts to pass this landmark tax reform law, and I am

confident it will have lasting, positive effects for our economy.

With that, I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF MICHAEL BROWN

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am honored and privileged to come to the floor of the Senate today to talk about Michael Brown, appointed by President Donald Trump to be a district judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

Mr. Brown is an outstanding citizen of our State. He is married to a wonderful lady and has three wonderful children. He is a graduate of Marist School, a graduate of Georgetown University, and a graduate of the University of Georgia Law School, magna cum laude, in 1994.

He has a record of practicing law in the private sector that is unparalleled, having worked for both King & Spalding and also Alston & Bird.

King & Spalding produced many of the judges on the bench of the United States of America with distinguished records, not the least of which is the Attorney General under President Jimmy Carter, Griffin Bell, an outstanding Attorney General from our State. They also produced Sam Nunn, an outstanding Member of the Senate. They produced many judges in our State. Many were also produced from the firm where he practices now, which is Alston & Bird.

It is a privilege for me to talk about Michael for many reasons. Most importantly, he comes with a background of experience in the private sector. He has been recommended by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as one of the great lawyers in the United States of America in business matters. One of the things our courts need is a tempered balance of business and consumers. There is no question that someone who is not a voice for business as a judge but has experience in business as a judge will make a tremendous difference. I know he will in the Northern District of Georgia.

I thank the President for nominating Michael and making this appointment. To the Members of the Senate, I urge you to join me in voting for Michael Brown for the Northern District of Georgia to be our next judge there. He will be a great judge on the bench. It will be a great decision for us, and it will continue the growth and improvement of outstanding jurists confirmed by this Senate in this year 2018.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to begin the series of votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Parker nomination?

Mr. BURR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 5 Ex.]

##### YEAS—98

Alexander	Gardner	Nelson
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Bennet	Grassley	Peters
Blumenthal	Harris	Portman
Blunt	Hassan	Reed
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Brown	Heinrich	Roberts
Burr	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cantwell	Heller	Rubio
Capito	Hirono	Sanders
Cardin	Hoeven	Sasse
Carper	Inhofe	Schatz
Casey	Isakson	Schumer
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott
Cochran	Jones	Shaheen
Collins	Kaine	Shelby
Coons	Kennedy	Smith
Corker	King	Stabenow
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Tester
Cotton	Leahy	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Enzi	Merkley	Whitehouse
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden
Fischer	Murphy	Young
Flake	Murray	

##### NOT VOTING—2

Booker	McCain
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Michael Lawrence Brown, of Georgia, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, John Barasso, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, James M. Inhofe, Johnny Isakson, Mike Crapo, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Michael B. Enzi, James Lankford, Lindsey Graham, Pat Roberts, Todd Young.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Michael Lawrence Brown, of Georgia, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 97, nays 1, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 6 Ex.]

##### YEAS—97

Alexander	Gardner	Paul
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Peters
Bennet	Grassley	Portman
Blumenthal	Harris	Reed
Blunt	Hassan	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Brown	Heinrich	Rounds
Burr	Heitkamp	Rubio
Cantwell	Heller	Sanders
Capito	Hoeven	Sasse
Cardin	Inhofe	Schatz
Carper	Isakson	Schumer
Casey	Johnson	Scott
Cassidy	Jones	Shaheen
Cochran	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Smith
Coons	King	Stabenow
Corker	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Tester
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Manchin	Toomey
Cruz	Markey	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	Young
Fischer	Murray	
Flake	Nelson	

##### NAYS—1

Hirono

##### NOT VOTING—2

Booker	McCain
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 97, the nays are 1.

The motion is agreed to.